

THE KEEN EYE of the CUSTOMS BOGIE

WHY It Is Foolish to Attempt to Slip Dutiable Articles Past Uncle Sam's Gatekeepers and How They Manage to Keep Tab on Those Who Are Likely to Make the Effort.

THE smuggler of the old time romance, with his brace of pistols, his cutlass, his cave on the rockbound coast, his rakish, low lying craft and his night landings, is not a spectre of the past; he merely has changed his methods. So, too, the daring adventures and hairbreadth escapes of the stern, silent men of the revenue service, armed to the teeth, playing their dangerous game of hide and seek with death in thrilling night raids and deadly encounters, live for the most part imprisoned between the misty covers of books; but the men themselves still play the great game with methods that are finer if less gory.

Silent, watchful and invisible, except when it reaches out to strike; doubly terrible to the evildoer because its ways are hid, the Customs Bogie sits at Washington, reaching out the long arm that overshadows every land.

A smug, self-satisfied individual entering the port of New York declares dutiable goods worth three hundred dollars.

"Are you quite sure you have forgotten nothing?" asks the inspector, who examines his trunk. The smug individual is quite sure. He says so with obvious irritation, and when asked pointedly to acknowledge his signature upon the declaration he does it with a shrug.

And then a curious thing happens. That uncanny inspector casually runs a hand through Mr. Tourist's baggage, and from that eager case, where the traveller judged it must be quite safe, deftly extracts a five thousand dollar diamond, bought of the Amsterdam cutters, in Tulpostraat, to one of whom casually he had confided his destination. As he thinks the lapidary could have had no possible reason for telling he dismisses suspicion from his mind, but that is because he doesn't know about the twenty-five per cent commission which presently will find its way to Amsterdam.

Or, if he has confided in no lapidaries, it surely never would occur to him to suspect that agreeable tourist from Michigan, or that pretty girl who condescended to a mild flirtation while they were doing the English cathedrals. So the sorely puzzled traveller goes his way vaguely suspecting that he has been fool enough to play blind man's bluff with an adversary that meant business. If he does not learn easily, he may try it again with extra precautions, only to come another cropper.

If this would-be smuggler were wise he would understand that he has been watched by a hundred eyes and heard by a hundred ears, and that of these there are thousands whispering supposed secrets by cable from every port in the world, in every considerable city and on most of the ships that touch American ports. In Sulu, in the far Pacific, the pearl merchant probably knows the white clad American consul as good company. That this gentleman may have official duties he seldom considers, and possibly he does not see the light, even after the consignee of his crooked invoice suddenly feels the heavy hand of Uncle Sam upon his collar.

The happy collector who has picked up a rare Botticelli copy worth much money is all too prone to confide his good luck to that adable stranger who happened to be on the ground and who also is returning from the Piazza Rosso, in Genoa. And then Marie, that model exquisite at Mme. B's—now, how could Mrs. A. ever dream that a goody portion of the fine she has to pay on her wonderful Paris gown is to be added to that maiden's dot! Of course, Mrs. A. has read of some such systems of espionage in countries like Russia, but in plain, everyday, matter of fact United States—why, it's absurd! That horrid inspector is suspicious of every one and he's looking for false bottoms in one's trunk anyhow. But it is curious how he chanced to pick out the very trunk, isn't it? A professional packer stored the gowns in that trunk. Marie had been so good as to recommend him as reliable. As for Marie and that obliging packer, they were certainly very everyday persons, possessing neither badges, disguises nor a mysterious manner. Who would be so base as to suspect them?

The Eye Never Shut.

And yet these same unromantic appearing persons and thousands of others like them, forming a great army that spreads itself over the face of the world, are the eyes of the customs bogie. They do not themselves realize the romance of the mighty system of which they form a part; they have possibly no idea either of its extent or complexity, but they contribute their mite to the enormous total, adding here and there a trifle to the flood of information that pours into the Treasury Department from all directions.

Evidences of the perfect system of espionage which the Treasury Department at Washington is organizing in every section of the globe where Americans travel are coming to light in this city almost every day, and certainly every week. That Uncle Sam does not guess nowadays is shown by the fact that when an inspector questions the declaration of a homecoming traveller and compels him to submit to the humiliation of being searched he finds probably in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that the man is a smuggler to a greater or less degree.

The customs inspector assigned to the man with the five thousand dollar diamond not only knew that it was there, but probably also the very place where it was secreted. He had seen the trunk already through the eyes of the Vigilants—scores of men and women, few of whose names appear on the government payroll.

The foreign consuls, the special Treasury agents, the auxiliaries and the volunteers make up the four divisions of this amazing service. Of these the volunteers make up the majority. They are a motley array of hotel servants, ordinary tourists, the police, ship folk, shoe clerks, store proprietors, all actuated by the great incentive of a twenty-five per cent profit on the value of the goods detected.

The class of secret agents known as "tourists," or special Treasury agents, are among the most effective. These meet the suspected traveller on a footing of social equality, which is in itself half the battle. Travellers are prone to confide such intimates as their "basses" to each other, and seldom indeed does this method fail, even to the obtaining of the minutest particulars. All these agents are in close touch with the nearest American consul, who in turn notifies the Treasury Department by cable.

They enter on their work only after a long and difficult apprenticeship of four years' general service in the Customs Department before they are allowed to take the special civil service examination, after passing which they are assigned to work at home or abroad, as the case may be. Through the



"Are You Quite Sure You Have Forgotten Nothing?" Asks the Inspector Who Examines His Trunk

special agent and the consul the home government is kept informed of the market price of practically every marketable article in his district. Highly trained in his line, the special agent is qualified to discover evidence even of crooked intent, and once his suspicions are aroused the smuggler is as good as caught.

The auxiliaries are those agents of trades organizations which now, more energetically than ever before, are working with the government toward the eradication of smuggling. The Jewellers' Protective Organization is the foremost organization of this class. It is now a design of this branch of the service to establish a thorough secret service system through England, Germany, Holland and France and the big centres of Europe and it was to that end that Mr. Ludwig Nissen left for Paris on June 4. Within a few months the new system will be in operation and the smuggler who passes the meshes of that net will be clever indeed.

Speaking of the extreme difficulty of smuggling under the present development of the customs system, Mr. William Loeb, Jr., Collector of the Port of New York, said recently to the writer:—

"The man who can smuggle anything into the United States by way of New York is the exception nowadays. Never before in the history of the local customs office have the conditions the smuggler must overcome been so formidable. Never before have all the ramifications of the service been so elaborate and so adequate. Even though a tourist intending to smuggle escapes one branch, ninety-nine times out of a hundred he will be caught by another."

"How did you do it?" he was asked.

"One reason," said Mr. Loeb, "is the increased efficiency of the men. It is of a very high grade to-day. Honesty and worth are the requisites I demand. Influence, so called, or political pull, mean nothing to me. The man who has earned the place gets it—he is the head of the legal department or a job as watchman on the piers. By this method an esprit de corps has been brought about that means a continued growth for the better."

A Model Scheme.

This obtains abroad among the special Treasury agents, who are appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury, as well as here. Working together, then, it is not to be wondered at that the several departments form a general system which we believe is a model of its kind, one which any sort of malefactor will find exceedingly hard to break in any degree.

"We brought about this condition, first, by a general housecleaning, and then came the changes. We put a special watchman on each pier gate. Anything not bearing an inspector's stamp—one that cannot be removed, substituted or used over again—he holds up. We made the rule that the manifest for goods shall be in within twenty-four hours. We established a stringent rule against tipping. We put everybody on the same level. The common citizen must receive the same treatment as the millionaire. We play no favorites whatever."

Not only do the ocean ports have to be guarded, but the Canadian, and especially the Mexican, frontiers are open to the broads of smugglers. Close watch has to be kept in South American ports, and in many Asiatic centres are eyes which are watchfully fixed on the American merchant and his tourist brother.

The picturesque smuggler of the past is gone; his successor travels first class and dresses for dinner. He chats with the customs bogie over the walnuts and wine instead of hacking at him with a knife; his brain is his capital.

The tricks resorted to by the smuggler are, of course, endless in variety; but most of them strike



Her Prayer Book Was Found To Be Full of Diamonds

In the palmy days all the enterprising smuggler had to do was to make out a double set of invoices, one fraudulent, and in this manner hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of goods passed under the nose of the port officers. Another way was to consign goods to wrong persons or to bring them in under false entries. Some took advantage of the former "year's residence abroad" rule and escaped large payment of duties. But the special agent and a radical alteration in the methods of the Customs House have since embarrassed those enterprising individuals considerably.

When the present day smuggler buys anything at all, whether in Japan, Mexico, France or where he will, the fact is known at once in Washington. Consequently, when his goods appear in port for entry they are appraised, not at his valuation, but according to their present market value in the place where he bought them. Goods unclaimed now go to the Appraisers' Store within twenty-four hours. Every individual piece of baggage or shipment must be tallied, and a one year residence no longer fills the bill. A residence of two years is required—an ordeal that not many smugglers care to endure.

Vast Sums Forfeited.

The value of forfeited goods in this port last year was more than \$100,000. This was by simple civil proceedings. Since April 1, 1909, criminal suits have netted the government in fines \$62,335. The seizure of five sleeper trunks early in that month was the beginning of a long series of similar woes for smugglers, while the revelations and prosecutions in connection with the sugar frauds was, of course, one of the biggest items of the year's business. And it was all due to the growing perfection of the whispering gallery methods of the government.

Before the matter was taken adequately in hand at least a million dollars' worth of dresses and dress goods was smuggled into the country by the sleeper trunk devices. It was finally found that a baggage master on one of the New York piers and a confederate operating in Paris were at the bottom of the trouble and were working with certain dressmakers.

The "sleeper trunk" method is a very effective one, or was, in its day. Baggage containing the dutiable goods was allowed to lie unclaimed and finally would be taken to the pier of a steamer that had just left. Here it would be claimed by some one who said he or she had "just missed" the recently departed vessel. The person was allowed to cart the baggage away without further examination; a thing no longer possible.

The practice of claiming two years' foreign residence is now checked by the perfect tab kept on certain persons, and all the other tricks of the trade are anticipated with equal certainty and ease simply by attention to a myriad of details from every part of the globe.

And yet, considered from the point of view of the special agent, his task is one of appalling difficulty. American tourists are now flocking to Europe at the rate of five thousand first class passengers a week, and this has been going on since the middle of April. Mediterranean travel was unusually heavy earlier in the season, and the total of first cabin tourists probably will mount to sixty thousand by the time the season is well under way.

These tourists will spend in the course of their whirlwind tour through Europe about \$48,000,000. They will scatter, and are even now scattering, from Norway to the Nile. A thousand scents will be picked up here, there and everywhere. The volunteers, eager for their share, are on the lookout, and all the others, up to the ranks of the polished tourists, are looking about with watchful eyes. In the Rue Simons of Antwerp, the Hoiborn Viaduct of London, the Rue Paletier of Paris, a clew may be picked up among the lapidaries and jewellers, and straightway down goes into a book the things Uncle Sam wants to know. Mr. Jones, of Indianapolis, purchases an uncut diamond; Mrs. Smith, of Memphis, received a ruby pendant as a gift from her brother; Mr. White, the importer, spent four days in one diamond establishment, but as far as could be learned took no jewels away with him. Possibly a tourist might get Mr. White's confidence in the matter. And so on, endlessly.

A picture pronounced by experts to be a real Rubens has been picked up in a peasant's cabin in Scheveningen. Mrs. Blank, society leader in Philadelphia, has purchased largely at a certain shop. It all goes in the book—where the Bogie reads it with his one big eye—and one and all they come to grief. These tourists, says the government, are returning millions poorer than at the time of their exodus, and this reacts on the American merchant, who has a right to be protected from the double loss.

As to those who, without any special malice aforethought, fall unwarily into the government's inevitable snare, there is really little excuse for them. The pursers on board all the big steamships have plenty of government literature on the subject, warning them to be good. The government makes

no secret of its precautions, and takes every opportunity to explain the hopelessness of smuggling, and those who are wise enough to listen. The officers of the steamships are always ready with personal advice, to keep their charges in the straight and narrow path if they are willing to be guided. But always there is a certain percentage who, in spite of many bitter experiences, stick to the idea that they can beat the government off-hand in a game at which men are spending their lives; a game in which the customs bogie has acres up.

"Our aim is to subject the honest and conscientious passenger to the minimum of inconvenience consistent with the law," said Mr. Loeb, in concluding his remarks on the service. "On the other hand, we aim to force the maximum of inconvenience, expense and humiliation upon the smuggler. Our avenues of information are broad and long. It is folly for any one to attempt fraud. If they can



On the Pier the Baby Was Found To Be a Large Doll

cape to-day, to-morrow they will be caught. And we strive to inflict the just legal punishment with considerable success."

HOW THE SWISS CAPITAL GOT ITS NAME.

THERE is a curious tradition as to how the Swiss capital—Berne, the city of bears—got its name. Count Berthold of Zähringen, by whom the city was built, in the twelfth century, was greatly puzzled as to what it should be called. He called a council of the nobility to help him out, but not one of them could suggest a fitting name.

Count Berthold, like Nimrod, was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and in this emergency he resolved to go hunting for a name. He set out, with men and horses, dogs and weapons, and before he had chased long he encountered and slew a bear.

"A bear my city shall be!" he is said to have exclaimed. It was accordingly called Bär, which is the German word for bear. In the course of time this name was extended by use into Bären, which is the plural of Bär, and then contracted to Berne.

Whether or not the legend is true, the Swiss city has always borne a bear upon its escutcheon, and not only are sculptured and pictured bears to be seen all about Berne, but for an uncertain but very long time the city has maintained living bears to remind its citizens that their patron is this redoubtable animal.

The municipal bears of Berne always have been well taken care of, but in the eighteenth century, as well as their keepers, were particularly fortunate, for in that century a certain rich maiden lady without any save most distant relatives, made provision in her will for the sum of 60,000, annually to be expended in the maintenance of the city's bears. The governors of the city were constituted the guardians of the bears, and as the keepers of these animals were taken care of in no mean fashion, their office became very much sought after.

It is a curious fact that in the name of the Berne bears splendid balls and parties, attended by the nobility and the wealthy merchants and their families, actually became a not infrequent feature of life in the Swiss capital.

All this, however, came to an end with the advent of the French Revolution, for then the bears, like the Swiss themselves, felt the iron hand of the conqueror when the army of the new republic, under the command of General Brune, took possession of Berne. The bears were then sent to the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris, where, however, they were pelted by the Parisians to such an extent that they had little cause to regret their transfer.

The people of Berne to-day possess a number of the descendants of these bears, and they are regarded with much affection. In a large enclosure a number of the bears are kept, and a municipal law makes it a misdemeanor to feed them anything save bread and fruit of the best quality.

THE SOUTHERN AURORA.

DURING the magnetic storms that occurred not long ago attention was invited to the beauty of the displays of the aurora borealis in these latitudes and to the evidence of a connection between these magnificent phenomena and the varying condition of the sun.

But the aurora is not confined to the northern hemisphere. There is also an aurora australis, which centres about the south magnetic pole of the earth just as the northern lights are related to the north magnetic pole. If the impulse which gives unwonted splendor to these lights really comes from the sun it is natural to assume that its effect must be felt in the southern as well as in the northern hemisphere, especially when we consider that the earth is hardly more than a speck in comparison with the sun.

Evidence has been adduced to show that this contention is well founded, and that the inhabitants on the other side of the equator enjoy from time to time celestial spectacles of this nature quite equal to those that have been seen in the north. When the great aurora and magnetic storm alluded to were visible here a similar display was seen at Mauritius, and still more lately a very beautiful aurora has been witnessed in Australia, especially remarkable for its color.



Salvation Army Lassic Led to an Investigation of Her Poke Bonnet, Which Was Found To Be Full of Expensive Gloves

some more or less well-beaten path. There is often shown a singular lack of appreciation of the difficulties. The inspectors still yawn disgustedly over false-bottomed trunks, hollow French heels, hair rat depositories, &c., and long for a foeman to come along who shall be worthy of their steel. There is nothing the customs men enjoy better than a tilt with a really clever adversary, or a hunt for the invisible article which they simply know is in his possession. The awakening of those who resort to the usual flimsy tricks is generally a sudden and exciting one. Among those instances, when it is a matter of Greek meeting Greek, some have become classics in the annals of the service.

One of these was the case of a nun reported to be travelling to America alone. Some astute customs man happened to reflect that nuns of that particular order always travelled in pairs. The nun accordingly was searched on her arrival. Her prayer book was found to be full of diamonds and in her clothing were many other dutiable articles.

The stewardess of the steamship chanced to remark that a woman occupying a certain cabin had a baby that never cried. She couldn't understand it and made a report to that effect. On the pier the baby was found to be a large doll tricked out in jewelry and fine laces.

On another occasion exaggerated demureness of a Salvation Army lassie led to an investigation of her poke bonnet, which was found to be full of expensive gloves.